



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

We've had a busy few months and many members of our AOT team have been on the road participating in sales missions and trade shows promoting Arizona as a premier tourist destination. In fact, this week AOT is organizing the annual Arizona Road Show in Mexico from May 28 to June 1. We are leading an Arizona delegation that includes representatives from the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), Scottsdale CVB, Greater Phoenix CVB, Tempe CVB, City of Chandler, Renaissance Resort Scottsdale, Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa and Westcor Shopping Centers. The delegation will offer travel agent seminars in both Mexico City and Guadalajara, with tour operator appointments in Mexico City and a tour operator dinner in Guadalajara. Mexico is an extremely important market for Arizona and Mexican travelers rely heavily on travel agents and tour operators in their vacation planning, so it is imperative their travel industry is up-to-date on Arizona tourism product. By having such a strong Arizona delegation traveling to Mexico for the Road Show, we are showing that the Grand Canyon State is truly dedicated to growing visitation from the Mexican market.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Save the Date: The 27th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism

This year's 27th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism is July 11-13 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa. The program will be a dynamic mix of fresh industry information and resources that can help you plan for another year of marketing Arizona to audiences around the world. Breakout sessions and speakers will teach you how to take tourism marketing and promotion to a new level. With so many exciting opportunities happening nationally, the Arizona Office of Tourism and its association partners are committed to bringing you the most up-to-date tools available for tourism professionals. For more information and to register for the event, please visit www.aztourismconference.com.

Arizona Tourism University (ATU) – How to Build an Itinerary and Conduct a FAM Tour

AOT is proud to present the next series of ATU workshops "How to Build an Itinerary and Conduct a FAM Tour." This workshop series will answer common questions such as what is a Familiarization (FAM) tour, why does AOT conduct FAM tours, is a FAM tour right for your community, and how to develop and execute an itinerary. Below is a listing of workshop times and locations. To register, please contact Sarah Martins by phone at 602-364-3687 or via e-mail at smartins@azot.gov.

June 20, 2007
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Mountainside Inn
642 East Route 66
Williams, AZ 86046

June 21, 2007
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Cochise College
Benson Center
1025 State Route 90
Benson, AZ 85602

June 22, 2007
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Crowne Plaza San Marcos Golf Resort
One San Marcos Place
Chandler, AZ 85225

Trippin' with AOT

Caring Tourism Professionals Head Back to the Old West for Restoration and Preservation Project

More than 300 travel industry professionals headed west to Virginia City, NV to bring the past back to life during the 5th Annual Tourism – Caring for America restoration event May 18 and

19th. AOT's Jennifer Sutcliffe joined the group of industry volunteers, including CEOs, transportation executives, hoteliers, tour operators, travel agents, executives of convention and visitors bureaus and other travel industry professionals, to rejuvenate historic sites and buildings in the old silver mining town that sits atop the Comstock Lode, once known as the "richest place on earth." Volunteers took on tasks such as clear an overgrown historic cemetery, paint historic buildings and churches, catalog historic artifacts, rebuild stairs for the old opera house, clean and restore a historic train car and various other restorative tasks that will bring back a bit of sparkle to an old west city that is a grand example of western expansion. Tourism Cares for Tomorrow is dedicated to the restoration and preservation of worldwide tourism sites, and this event allowed tourism industry professionals to "give back" to this community whose primary industry today is tourism. For more information, contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at (602) 364-3693 or jsutcliffe@azot.gov. Pictures and stories from the event will be available soon at www.tourismcares.org.

Industry News

Fifth Annual Historic Preservation Partnership Conference

The Arizona Preservation Foundation, Arizona State Historic Preservation Office, Arizona Main Street Program, and the City of Prescott invite you to join them at the 5th Annual Historic Preservation Partnership Conference. The goal of the conference is to bring together preservationists from around the state to exchange ideas and success stories, to share perspectives and solutions to preservation issues and to foster a sense of cooperation between the diverse Arizona preservation communities. This year's conference will be held June 13 – 16th, 2007, Hassayampa Inn, Prescott, Arizona. To register, please visit <http://www.azstateparks.gov/partnerships/shpo/shpo.html>

Funds Allocated for Crisis Research

The University of Florida is providing \$750,000 in seed money to fund a Tourism Crisis Recovery Institute through 2011. Housed in the university's Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sports Management, the institute will research how local and global crises affect tourism, and will aid commercial clients and governments in recovering from the economic fallout. Crisis situations include hurricanes, plane crashes and even the threat of bird flu. (*Page 3C, Miami Herald*)

Promoting Cultural & Heritage Tourism

Departments and agencies of the federal government and a number of travel-related organizations in the private sector are working together and separately to persuade Americans and visitors from abroad to visit the nation's cultural and historic treasures. There have been successes and disappointments along the way, but the effort has encouraged cultural and heritage initiatives across the country. Cultural and heritage travel differs from other mass-market tourism, noted a position paper released at the U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism Summit in Washington, D.C., last October. The document defines the segment as unique, authentic and a one of a kind, non-cookie-cutter experience. "Consumers "don't want it (cultural and heritage travel) packaged, noted another summit paper by New York University's Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality. "They are after experiences" such as sampling local food, learning about ethnic groups and visiting museums, according to a study released at the summit. "They don't want 'generic.'" Earlier studies by the Travel Industry Association noted that cultural and heritage tourists say longer and spend more than other travelers. (*Page 57, HSMAI Marketing Review, Spring*)

RX for Success in \$100 Billion-plus US Travel Revolution

It's being called a "travel revolution" as online sales are expected to exceed \$100 billion this year, with US online bookings surpassing offline bookings for the first time in history. eMarketer estimates that 41.3 million US households will book travel online this year, representing 52.5% of all US online households. New travel sites are proliferating almost on a day-to-day basis. "Many of these new sites chip away at the expertise that drives people to online travel agencies, which already feel pressure from travel supplier sites like those run by airlines and hotels," reported eMarketer. Current industry players must stay alert, otherwise they risk being blindsided by new competitors that fall under their radar," according to the group's report *US Online Travel: The Threat of Commoditization*. The report estimates sales to remain strong this year until 2010, though the growth rate will steadily decline. A tighter market is expected to exacerbate the fierce competition between online travel agencies and travel suppliers. "To succeed in the brave new world of online travel," said Jeffrey Grau, senior analyst and author of the report. "Industry players must be willing to reinvent themselves to keep up with consumer, technology and competitive forces." He added: "Young people coming of age during the dawn of the Internet have different expectations of the businesses that serve them. They like businesses to come to them, with the right product, at the right time, in the right way." This will challenge travel providers to transition from a service model based on mass consumption to one centered on creating customized packages for groups of travelers with unique interests and needs, he said. Just how far has the internet penetrated into the travel business. Consider this: Travel is by far the No. 1 activity among internet consumers. In some weeks, more travel is purchased online than every other category combined. The typical consumer making travel arrangements online, while edging towards the mainstream, remains slightly upscale, according to Forrester. The average individual is 44 years old and lives in a household with an income of \$76,000 a year. Fifty-three percent are male, 60 percent are college graduates and 55 percent hold professional or managerial jobs. At the same time, analysts agree the resilient brick-and-mortar travel agencies that are willing to provide a real service will always be around. Competitive forces will only crush those travel agents who have limited their services to mere order taking, they say. "The agent who can get you on that sold-out flight, or who can knock US\$4,000 off that international business class ticket, will not only survive, but will prosper because they know how to add value," Forrester senior analyst Henry Harteveldt told the E-Commerce Times. He added: "The 'order takers' are as relevant to today's travel industry as the 707 is to airline transportation. [They] drag down the whole travel agency industry." (Report by David Wilkening – TravelMole e-Newsletter)

International Visits up 9 Percent in February

The Commerce Department says 2.9 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in February, an increase of 9 percent over February 2006. Total visitation year-to-date for 2007 was up 7 percent from the first two months of 2006. International visitors spent \$9.2 billion during February, up 8 percent from February 2006. Canadian visitation grew 2 percent over February 2006, while arrivals from Mexico among those traveling to interior points in the U.S. were up 30 percent in February over the same month last year. Overseas arrivals, excluding Canada and Mexico, increased 9 percent in February and are up 5 percent year-to-date. Details at 202-482-0140. (Special to TA)